

IN MEMORY OF EILEEN VICTORIA AND JAMES OTTO WILSON

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Australia lost a pair of remarkable and enthusiastic amateur lepidopterists in 1972. Although it was my fortune to know Mr and Mrs Wilson for only the last six years of their lives, we came to form a deep friendship soon after our first meeting in 1966. During this period the Wilsons were leading a quiet and relatively secluded life; visitors were rare in their home. I saw them an average of 3 times per month, often having dinner with them. Our "sessions" on entomology and rearing sometimes lasted into the early morning hours. Numerous were his reminiscences of certain earlier southern Australian lepidopterists, particularly of his friend A. J. Turner, and one of his early correspondents, Edward Meyrick. Occasionally we took half-day field trips together, to areas the Wilsons had long known in the Mt. Lofty Range south of Adelaide, some of which are depicted in the photographs.

They were both born in Broken Hill, New South Wales; Jim in Mica Street, on 22 May, 1898; Eileen (nee Dally) on 2 February, 1900. As children, they went to school together in Broken Hill. After J. O. Wilson's earliest years in Broken Hill, and later boarding for several years at the Albury Grammar School, his family moved (about 1918) to Glenelg, South Australia, now a southwestern suburb of Adelaide, although a separate town in those days. The Dally family followed a few years later, also settling in Glenelg, so Jim and Eileen were destined to meet again. They were married 7 May, 1921, but never had any children. They lived in the same house, which they built (at 42 Wilson Terrace, Glenelg East), for about 40 years, until they both died in 1972 (Eileen on 16th March and Jim on 15th August). He had no sisters, but is survived by two brothers: H. G. Wilson of Normanville, South Australia, and Rex Wilson of Melbourne.

Regarding a middle initial ("D"), which appears in J. O. Wilson's name on some of his specimen labels and notes, he told me (about 1969) that he had recently learned this was the result of some error concerning his birth certificate, and that he had gone through most of his life under the mistaken assumption that "D" was part of his name. An examination of J. O. Wilson's birth certificate confirmed that his name was recorded simply as 'James Otto Wilson'.

Jim Wilson was a diminutive man, almost elfish in appearance, with a lively personality to match. His height was about 5'2", and Mrs Wilson was somewhat shorter. That the microlepidoptera should have been his favourite group seems entirely natural! Among the micros, the Oecophoridae and Xyloryctidae were perhaps his major interests, at least during his last decade. Although Mrs Wilson was not as deeply interested in entomology as her husband, it would be impossible to write about Jim Wilson without including her. They were inseparable. During their last few years, she developed a considerable interest in the "livestock"

aspect of their studies—the rearing of larvae collected in the field and from eggs obtained in confinement.

J. O. Wilson was also greatly interested in photography, having been employed in that field for many years, including about 30 years assisting Prof. Robertson for the C.S.I.R.O. (Adelaide). His knowledge of that subject was put to frequent use at home, in his private darkroom, where he spent many hours. The photographs from his humble (but incredibly ingenious) dark-room often compared very favourably with the best efforts of some modern professionals installed in expensively-equipped laboratories.

I find the writing of this brief obituary, for two of my closest friends, a bittersweet task. Recalling the many delightful hours we spent together, at home and afield in South Australia, has been a pleasure. I would like to thank H. G. Wilson for his help in the preparation of this paper, and for making available many notes, articles and photographs connected with J. O. Wilson's life before I knew him. It seems natural to portray Jim Wilson at ease in his field clothes, happily



Figs 1-2. J.O.W. beating a shrubby *Casuarina* sp., in search of larvae, 6.5 km south of Ashbourne, Mt. Lofty Range, South Australia, 23 August, 1968.

Fig. 3. Mr and Mrs Wilson and Dienne McFarland, on a picnic-outing near Aldinga Beach, south of Adelaide, 28 July, 1970.

Fig. 4. I. F. B. Common and J. O. Wilson discussing a larva they have just found in eucalypt leaf litter, 2 km east of Belair (Belair National Park), South Australia, 15 Aug., 1969.

Fig. 5. J.O.W. and his camera; loc. & date as in Fig. 1. (N. McFarland photos).

pursuing his interests; thus my choice of these five photographs from the many before me. The conventional "head and shoulders with necktie", seen in most obituaries, would not illustrate J. O. Wilson's personality in any meaningful way.

The J. O. Wilson moth collection went to the Australian National Insect Collection (Canberra) in May, 1972, in accordance with his wishes. Dr I. F. B. Common, Curator of Lepidoptera at the A.N.I.C., writes: "Although not a large collection, the J. O. Wilson material is of the greatest value because much of it came from the Adelaide area, and included such suburban localities as Parkside and Blackwood, the type localities of numerous species described by Oswald Lower . . . Being well mounted, reliably labelled and effectively preserved, the Wilson Collection is a valuable contribution to the study of microlepidoptera from southern Australia."

Papers by J. O. Wilson

1939. A new species of the family Nepticulidae (Lepidoptera). *Trans. R. Soc. S. Aust.* 63(2): 238-239.
 1972. A new species of *Thalainodes* (Lepidoptera: Geometridae-Ennominae) from central Australia. *Mem. Nat. Mus. Vic.* 33: 123-124 + plate.

RECENT LITERATURE

Compiled by M. S. Moulds

ALLEN, R. B.

1973. The processionary caterpillars, *Bendigo Nat.* 6(3): 54-55.
 Lepidoptera: *Ochropaster contraria*

ANONYMOUS

- 1973l. Tussock moth. *Bendigo Nat.* 6(3): 56.
 Lepidoptera: *Acyphas chionitis*
 Hymenoptera: Ichneumonidae
 1973m. A spring appearance of *Eurema smilax*, the grass yellow. (Lepidoptera: Pieridae). *Victorian Ent.* 3(5): 20.
 Report of an observation by J. F. Hutchinson.
 1973n. No title. [Summary of a paper concerning insect pests of eucalyptus by Mr J. A. Harris]. *Victorian Nat.* 90(5): 140.
 Lepidoptera: *Uraba lugens*
 Coleoptera: *Austroplatypus incomptus*
 Phasmidae
 1974. These butterflies are protected! *Ogyris otanes* C. & R. Felder, in Victoria. *Ogyris idmo halmaturia* Tepper, in Victoria. *Victorian Ent.* 4(1): 5.
 1974a. Pheromones in fruit fly and beetle control. *J. Agric., West. Aust.* (4)14(4): 257.
 Diptera: Mediterranean fruit fly
 Coleoptera: *Ips grandicollis*

CRANE, Honor

1974. "Butterfly excursion". *Latrobe Valley Nat.* 125: 2-3.

CROSBY, D. F.

1974. In: Exhibits. *Victorian Ent.* 4(1): 3-4.
 Lepidoptera: *Candalides goodingi*
Ogyris otanes